

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE WITH FOOT PAIN

# Orthotics

can help

## FAQs about orthotics

### What are orthotics?

Orthotics refers to custom-made shoe inserts prescribed by a licensed doctor of podiatric medicine, an osteopathic doctor, or a medical doctor after a medical examination and diagnosis. Orthotics are designed to accommodate or correct an abnormal or irregular walking pattern.

### How do orthotic devices work?

Orthotics make standing, walking, and running more comfortable and efficient by altering the angles at which the foot strikes the ground. Orthotics placed inside your shoes can absorb shock, improve balance, and take pressure off sore spots. Doctors of podiatric medicine pioneered and are developing more high-tech orthotics.

### What are Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPMs)?

DPMs are specialists in the foot and ankle. Some specialize in conservative care while others practice mostly as surgeons. Many DPMs specialize in the needs of people with diabetes. DPMs also assist other doctors in non-podiatric surgeries because of their special skills and doctor-patient relationships. The Department of Consumer Affairs' Board of Podiatric Medicine licenses and regulates DPMs.

### How do I find a DPM?

Ask your doctor for a referral, or contact the California Podiatric Medical Association for names of DPMs near you. Call 916.448.0248 or 800.794.8988 or visit [www.podiatrists.org](http://www.podiatrists.org). Be sure to check with the Department of Consumer Affairs at [www.dca.ca.gov](http://www.dca.ca.gov) to check your doctor's license and malpractice or discipline history. You also can contact the Board of Podiatric Medicine at 916.263.2647 or at [www.bpm.ca.gov](http://www.bpm.ca.gov) for license information.

FAQS CONTINUED INSIDE...

# Foot pain isn't normal. See a doctor of podiatric medicine for help.

## FAQS CONTINUED...

### Aren't orthotics just for runners or other athletes?

Runners and athletes have special needs, but orthotics can help non-athletes, as well. An imbalance in your feet—even a small one—can change your posture and affect your entire body. Orthotics might help you if:

- » One side of the sole of your shoe wears out faster than the other.
- » You frequently sprain your ankle.
- » You have chronic heel, knee, or lower back pain.
- » Your toes are not straight.
- » Your feet point inward or excessively outward when you walk.

### What about shoe inserts and arch supports sold at retail outlets?

Arch supports and shoe inserts made for standard shoe sizes are generally affordable and may be helpful, but are not suitable for everyone. Improper orthotics can injure healthy biomechanics, gait, and posture.

### My legs hurt, not my feet. could orthotics help?

Strains, aches, and pains in the legs, thighs, and lower back may be due to abnormal foot mechanics or slight differences in the length of the legs. Orthotics may be helpful.

### Can orthotics prescribed by a DPM really make a difference?

Properly prescribed orthotics have relieved debilitating pain for thousands of people. Many people who could not take a step without pain are walking normally and living more active lives because of orthotics. Anyone can provide mass-produced inserts, but only doctors are trained and licensed to diagnosis medical conditions and prescribe orthotics.

### Can orthotics take the place of foot surgery?

DPMs often recommend orthotics and other conservative care for many foot and ankle problems before considering podiatric surgery.

### What about people with diabetes?

For people with diabetes, arthritis, or other conditions, orthotics that do not fit properly can be dangerous. People with diabetes especially need proper diagnoses and prescriptions from a licensed doctor.

### Who makes orthotics?

Some DPMs will make their own orthotics for patients, but most send their prescriptions to certified pedorthists, orthotists, or pedorthic or orthotic laboratories. Properly prescribed orthotics are not inexpensive, but are very effective and long-lasting.

### Shopping tips

Don't fall for expensive "custom-made" shoe inserts sold at traveling home shows or health fairs, by mail order, or online. Orthotics should be prescribed by a doctor.

Be wary of shoe inserts marketed for medical purposes by unlicensed people. Check a medical professional's license online at [www.dca.ca.gov](http://www.dca.ca.gov). Click on "Verify a License."

### For more information

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